



USAID | BULGARIA

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USAID Business and Trade Development Program Fact Sheet (USAID/BTD)

Duration: June 2004 – September 2007

Budget: 4, 100, 000 USD

Implementer: Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA)

Primary Goal: To increase competitiveness through enhancing public private dialogue and providing focused assistance to sectors of Bulgarian economy with competitive potential.

USAID/BTD major areas of work and highlights of accomplishments:

*Strengthened the capacity of Bulgarian business support organizations (BSOs) to be more **effective and sustainable** providers of market-based services*

- Supported innovative projects of 36 BSOs through small grants (up to 5,000 USD each). Projects focused on developing the capacity to provide services to their members, promoting initiatives for business support events and information campaigns.
- Eight volunteers from MBA Enterprise Corps provided long term advisory assistance to 10 Bulgarian BSOs and enterprises. As a result, they put in place marketing and long term development strategies, and added new skills and the capacity to provide specific services.

*Enhanced **competitiveness** of the private sector*

- Assisted twelve Bulgarian software and ICT service companies in obtaining the internationally recognized certification for quality standard (CMMI) thus helping these companies achieve process maturity and gain competitive advantage.
- Through “Authentic Bulgaria,” an Independent Quality Mark developed by the project, assisted 92 small hospitality and tourism providers to improve their tourism products and attract high-value tourists.
- Launched www.informoney.org website to provide a searchable database of the most relevant financial products available for Bulgarian small and medium enterprises.
- Developed a methodology and practical tools to support business park development opportunities for manufacturing, logistics, and service industry users. On the basis of this methodology, a project for turning an old military base into a modern industrial park is well underway in the city of Dobrich.

*Upheld and preserved a **dynamic and efficient public-private dialogue** in the economic arena*

- Provided advisory assistance to the Ministry of Economy and Energy in drafting amendments to the investment law for Bulgaria, making it clearer and more understandable to investors as well as adding new incentives to attract investment.
- Prepared Regulatory Impact Assessments for three laws affecting businesses in Bulgaria. These assessments will serve as a methodological model for the administration when undertaking legal initiatives.
- Developed a Communication Strategy to raise public awareness of the work of the Economic Growth Council, an important tool for public private dialogue.